

## 'SKIPPER' SINCLAIR OF YACHT LURLINE IS CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

An appreciative article about H. H. Sinclair, well-known here as the skipper of the yacht Lurline in trans-Pacific races, is published in the December issue of Popular Electricity, written by Lewis R. Freeman. The article says:

H. H. Sinclair is almost as famous as a yachtsman as he is as a captain of electrical industry, and it was just after the finish of one of the earlier trans-Pacific races, which he had won with his Lurline, that the manager of a sugar plantation near Honolulu, over which the distinguished visitor was being shown, mentioned that the electrical services had been out of order for several days. The head electrician had been quite unable to locate the cause of the trouble, he said. Hardly pausing in his walk, Sinclair swept the short transmission line from the power house to the mill with a swift but searching glance, and then pointed to a small dark object which rested on the wire where they passed through the frond of a coconut palm.

"I think you will find that the removal of the body of that dead flying-fox will remedy the difficulty," he said quietly.

Henry Sinclair owes a great part of his success to a remarkable instinct for knowing "what's wrong," and pointing the way out of the difficulty. I have cited this comparatively trivial Hawaiian incident as illustrative in a small way of a faculty which has carried him through many times in a large way. Perhaps the best instance of this was also the most important—his building, in the early nineties, of the 80-mile line from the San Bernardino mountains to Los Angeles, a pioneering achievement of such audacity at the time that its success won for him the title which is still acknowledged rightfully to be his, "The Father of Long Distance Transmission."

At this time the world's longest distance transmission was one of 42 miles near Fresno, Calif., and the highest operating voltage 15,000 although the General Electric Company had operated an experimental line in its works at Schenectady up to 19,000 volts. Beyond this the experts of that company said it was impossible to go. Sinclair had already come prominently to the attention of the electrical world by the construction of the first multi-phase power transmission station ever built, but even with this extremely creditable achievement to point to, the "Powers That Were" adopted only an air of amused skepticism when he broached his new project. George Westinghouse dismissed him with "Better be satisfied with what you have done for the time being, young man. Your ideas are 10 years ahead of the times, and even if they were practicable today, the gas engine, as I now have it perfected, would drive you out of business."

Sinclair, with that remarkable faculty I have alluded to for putting his finger on the weakness of a scheme under consideration, believed that he knew the reason why the transmission of electrical energy had so far been limited to 19,000 volts. "The trouble lies in the insulators," he said. "The best of them in use at the present time are so porous that the current leaks away through them like water from a sponge. If we can have insulators made in the United States that are up to the samples of porcelain we have received from Italy, there should be no more trouble on that score." A Trenton manufacturer, after several attempts, produced the desired insulator.

With the success of his first long distance transmission project, Sinclair became a power in the realm of power, and when his small Redlands concern was absorbed by the Southern California Edison Electric Company in 1897, he went to the latter concern as vice-president and general manager. With the extension of the possibilities of long distance transmission, that company's market broadened until it included practically all of the country within a 125 mile radius of Los Angeles.

Mr. Sinclair resigned from the Edison company in 1907, and for the next

two years confined his activities to hydro-electric consultation. In 1909 he became vice-president and general manager of the Great Western Power Company, and spent the next three years in getting under way that concern's great \$50,000,000 scheme of hydro-electric development which will supply light and power to the cities of the Sacramento Valley and the San Francisco bay district. The most striking feature of his work in this period was, perhaps, the bringing through its crucial earlier stages a great dam at an elevation of 4000 feet on the Feather river.

For the last two years Mr. Sinclair has devoted the greater part of his time and energy to planning and building the remarkable industrial city of Torrance, near Los Angeles. He is still much sought for consultation on hydro-electric affairs, however, and during the next five years, in which time California plans to develop 1,000,000 horsepower in hydro-electric energy—there is no doubt that his peculiar genius for finding out "what's wrong" will often be called upon.

### FIRST AUTOMATIC GUN FOR USE ON AEROPLANES

Wonderful New Weapon, Invented by American, Demonstrated in England


[By Latest Mail]

LONDON.—The wonderful new machine gun invented by Lieutenant-colonel Isaac N. Lewis of the coast artillery, U. S. A., was demonstrated at the Bisley rifle range in the presence of members of the British army council and representatives of various foreign states. The gun was shown to be efficient when fired at or from aeroplanes. It fires 500 shots a minute from almost any position and with or without a tripod.

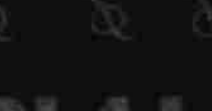


Lieutenant-colonel Lewis, a recognized authority on ordnance, was formerly on the staff of Lieutenant-general Miles. His invention, other ordnance experts say, is the first automatic gun that can be fired from an aeroplane.

### PLEASANT DINNER AT SEA.

A small but select group of journalists had been invited to come aboard for the new liner's maiden trip, and a merry party sat down to dine in the saloon just as they were leaving port. After crossing the bay a nasty, choppy sea made itself unpleasantly felt. The captain, seated at the head of the table, beamed upon the assembled company as the soup was circulated. "Well," he observed jovially, "I hope that all you 25 gentlemen will have a very pleasant trip, and that this little gathering of—er—24 will be much benefited by the voyage. I look round upon these—ahem—23 smiling faces as a father upon his family. I hope that all 14 of you will join me in drinking prosperity to our owners. I am sure that we eight will find each other's society very congenial, and I am grateful for the good judgment which has given me three such delightful shipmates. You and I, my dear sir—here, steward, clear away those plates and bring me my fish!"—Pearson's Magazine.



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